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A C H A R G E

DELIVERED AT

THE ORDINARY VISITATION

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF CHICHESTER

IN JULY, 1845.

BY

HENRY EDWARD MANNING, M.A.,

ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER.

L O N D O N :

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET;

AND WILLIAM HAYLEY MASON, CHICHESTER.

1845.

TO

THE CLERGY

OF

THE ARCHDEACONRY OF CHICHESTER,

This Charge,

PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS INSCRIBED

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE BROTHER AND SERVANT,

H. E. M.

A few passages, omitted in delivery, are marked with brackets.

A C H A R G E,

§c. §c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

LAST year, after a lapse of no less than six years, we received once more the instruction and admonition of our Bishop in visitation.

This year it falls again to my office to meet you in this place; and I derive no little strength and encouragement from the recollection that we have all alike so lately received counsel and guidance from our common Superior, under whom it is my happiness to act.

I have not thought it necessary to begin as yet a second parochial Visitation of the Archdeaconry, because the objects of such an inspection have been so widely anticipated, and because, through the efficient visitation of the Rural Deans, so ready a channel of communication with each several parish is always open. It is not necessary for me to repeat to the churchwardens my request that they will at all times apply to me whensoever I can render them assistance in the duties of their office. For the

same reasons I have thought it better to lay aside the intention of which I gave notice to the churchwardens at the Visitation of the year before last. I then said that I would issue to you, in a separate form, certain suggestions which at that time appeared to me to be necessary. I have not done so, not through any omission or forgetfulness on my part, for I so far fulfilled the promise I made you as to prepare them; but on consideration I found that they had become so little needed, that they were already so generally both known and acted upon, that I thought it better to leave the furtherance of a work so well begun to your own sense of duty and of Christian devotion.

We know who has said "them that honour me I will honour." The Book of the Prophet Haggai will bring this great law of God's kingdom before you. When the people of God should have raised up His house from ruin and desolation, they turned to a careful building of their own houses, to their tillage and their seeding, to their harvest and their hoard. And what was the end of it? They turned their face from God, and He turned His face from them. Nothing prospered in all their daily toil. Upon every thing there was a blight. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth

wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house. Therefore the heaven is stayed over you from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.”* Prosperity, indeed, is no certain proof of righteousness. The lands of the unrighteous are often fruitful, and the righteous man sometimes reaps a bare soil in harvest; but there is a law fixed and sure. If we wait on God, and love His worship and His service, He will bless us so far as is for our good in all the hopes and toils of life. The surest remedy of all our laborious and anxious care for this world is to live righteously and to reverence the sanctuary of God. “He that soweth righteousness shall have a sure reward.” I leave this work, therefore, in full confidence to your faith and good will.

* Haggai i. 6—11.

Let me now refer to a few topics which seem naturally to suggest themselves at such a time as this.

In the Session of 1844 an unpretending and very useful law was passed, entitled “An Act for the better Regulating the Offices of Lecturers and Parish Clerks.”*

The objects of this Act are two: first, to increase the number of the pastoral clergy, by converting lecturers, whose office at present is confined to preaching certain occasional sermons, into assistant curates; power being given to the Bishop, with consent of the incumbent of any parish, to require such preachers to undertake a share of parochial duties. A provision is also made for the appointment of persons in Holy Orders to the office of parish clerks, with all privileges and emoluments, and for placing them on the footing of stipendiary curates.

The next object of the Act is to provide a prompt remedy for neglect or misbehaviour in parish clerks. The prescribed mode of proceeding is as follows:—The ordinary is empowered to summon the parish clerk offending to appear before him, to examine witnesses on oath, and at his judgment to suspend for a time, or to remove altogether, any party convicted of misconduct in his office.

I would especially call the attention of the

* 7 & 8 Victoria, cap. lix.

Churchwardens to this part of the Act. The morals and conduct of these parochial officers fall directly within your care. Among the scandals which have affected the public worship of the Church, few have been more frequent, pernicious, and difficult of correction than misconduct in parish clerks. You have it now in your power to correct them to a great extent. Faithfulness on your part, in bringing cases of offence before the ordinary, will soon raise a higher standard, and by awakening in them the consciousness that they will be held to answer for misbehaviour, the necessity of instituting proceedings, together with the scandal, will be taken away.

[It is greatly to be lamented that an office of so much sacredness should have fallen into so low esteem. Next to the clergyman no one bears a charge of more public example, or one more nearly related to the highest blessings, than the clerk who is appointed to take part in the services of parochial worship. The very name is a witness that he is the Lord's servant. It has come to pass in the smaller, that is in most parishes, that the clerk has sunk into the sexton. But it is manifest that in the Book of Common Prayer, when the clerk or clerks are spoken of, an order of men in every way higher, and more nearly approaching to the quality of the clergy, is intended. By the Canons of 1603 it is required that the clerk "be of honest

conversation, sufficient for his reading, writing, and also for his competent skill in singing, if it may be :”* a part of his office being to respond to the officiating minister, and to lead, under him, in the parochial choir. At the very mention of the parish choir our minds are filled with painful recollections of discord and irreverence. It has become a proverb of parish feuds ; and yet there can hardly be conceived anything more truly Christian and devotional than the free service of a body of parishioners, chosen for their skill in music, and for their religious fitness, to assist their pastor in the worship of the parish church. To encourage a love of sacred music, and to induce our people to consecrate their gifts to the public service of God, has been found, from the earliest times, one of the readiest and surest means of promoting deeper habits of devotion. It is greatly to be regretted that people of standing and education, who cultivate God’s gifts for their own indulgence or for the ear of the world, do not render this service, I will not say to their pastor, but to God. It is strange that men whose life has few alleviations from daily toil should fail to see how high and pure a source of refreshment is open to them in the worship of the Church.†]

* Canons, 91, 1603.

† We know how the first peer of the realm once found the first lay subject in his parish church singing in the public

In an old political society like our own, where the Church pervades the whole frame and action of the State, it is hardly possible that any one portion of our internal order can be touched without effects, whether designed or no, upon the system or functions of the Church likewise. Certain measures having these effects are at this moment under consideration; and so great is their importance, and so intimate their relation to the deepest and highest offices of our ministry, that I shall need no other justification for adverting to them.

The first is a Bill intituled "An Act to Consolidate the Jurisdiction of the several Ecclesiastical Courts in England and Wales into one Court; and to enlarge the powers and authorities of such Court; and to alter and amend the law in certain matters Ecclesiastical."*

The outline of the Bill is as follows:†—It creates

service. The biographer of Sir Thomas More says:—The Duke of Norfolk "comminge on a tyme to Chelsey to dine with him, fortunèd to find him at church, singing in the quiere, with a surplus on his backe: to whom, after service, as they went home together arme in arme, the Duke said, 'My Lord Chancellor, a parish clarke, a parish clarke, you dishonour the King and his office.' 'Nay,' quoth Sir Thomas More, smilinge upon the Duke, 'your Grace may not thinke that the Kinge, your master and myne, will with me for serving God his master be offended, or thereby count his office dishonoured.'"—*Roper's Life of Sir Thomas More*, p. 29.

* Presented by the Lord Cottenham, April 25, 1845.

† During the time in which the above was written and delivered the bill in question underwent certain amendments. I

a new court, to be called Her Majesty's Court of Probate. It abolishes all courts, except the Consistories of the Archbishops and Bishops. It transfers to the Court of Probate, together with the power of excommunication, all jurisdiction now exercised by the Ecclesiastical Courts, except certain specified branches of jurisdiction, namely, such as monitions, faculties, sequestrations, licenses, dispensations, and the like—matters simply formal, technical, and secular. It then forbids the New Court of Probate to exercise such portions of its newly received jurisdiction as relate to incest, adultery, fornication, and other criminal offences.

Let us now sum up the effects of these provisions.

I pass by the probable inconvenience which may hereafter arise to parties engaged in testamentary questions by the extinction of the local courts; and the ill effect of taking away the professional practice which now affords a scanty remuneration to the legal advisers of the bishops and to the officers of the consistory courts. We will go to graver objections.

This new court, it is to be observed, is in no real sense an Ecclesiastical, but a purely Royal and secu-

think it right and just to retain the original outline of the measure, to show into what extraordinary proposals high-minded and well-intentioned men conversant only with the secular aspect of ecclesiastical subjects may be led. There is no need of pointing at the incalculable evils to which the Church must be exposed from such legislation.

lar court. It represents the Crown alone. It is necessary to the existence of an Ecclesiastical court that it represent a spiritual person. The Crown, at the highest stretch of prerogative lawyers, is no more than a *mixta persona*,* partly lay, and partly ecclesiastical, that is, in no sense Spiritual, which element is, by the Thirty-nine Articles† of the Church, carefully excluded from the supremacy of the Crown. The court is therefore ecclesiastical, less the spiritual element of a Church court; or, in other words, it is purely secular in authority, though it take cognizance of ecclesiastical causes. To this purely secular court is transferred the primary and entire jurisdiction now exercised by the Church in matters of marriage and divorce. By the Report of the Commission in 1832 these are described as “purely questions of civil right between individuals in their lay character, and are neither spiritual, nor affecting the Church Establishment.”‡ Surely this is going further than was either needed or intended.

By the universal doctrine of the canon law the essence of marriage is held to be the consent or con-

* Coke's Reports, *Caudrey's Case*, p. lviii., et passim. The double use of the word *Spiritual* has led to endless confusion. The maxim, “*Reges Sacro oleo uncti sunt Spiritualis jurisdictionis capaces*,” means only *in foro exteriori*, i.e., *Ecclesiastical*, as distinct from *Spiritual* in its first and pure intention.

† Article xxxvii.

‡ Report on Ecclesiastical Courts, &c., p. 12.

tract between the parties. The solemnizing of this contract in the face of the Church conferred on it the character of Holy Matrimony: the civil courts, for their own uses, took cognizance of that solemnization and character as the complete proof of lawful and perfect marriage. Let it be admitted that the essence is not in the benediction, but in the contract; that a civil tribunal, as Parliament, may now, as a *fact* in law,* proceed at once to divorce without sentence of the Church in its courts. Will this

*. By the law of England at this moment the bond of marriage is indissoluble. What are commonly called divorces are either—(1) *Separations* of the parties *a mensâ et thoro*, the bond (*vinculum matrimonii*) remaining undissolved—or (2) *Suspensions* (i.e. violations) of the law by Act of Parliament, called divorce *a vinculo*, which are only *privilegia* in individual cases for which the principles of the law, common, statute, ecclesiastical, have no place or warrant. See Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Ecclesiastical Courts Bill, with Minutes of Evidence, Session 1844, pp. 24, 25, 26, 27; Evidence of Sir S. R. Lushington and Sir J. Stoddart. The indissolubility of the marriage bond is founded on the sanctity of the Divine institution (Sanchez de S. Matrim., lib. ii., Disp. xiii., 8). For the same cause it has always been held to be matter of spiritual cognizance. Van Espen, tom. iii., p. 640. Sanchez de S. Matrim., lib. x. disp. viii. 15. This makes the subject of divorce by Parliament to be a matter of the gravest kind. The first absolute divorce by special Act of Parliament was no earlier than 1668 (see Rogers's *Eccl. Law*, p. 324, and note a). It is a practice at variance with the law as it existed down to that time, founded on no principle recognized by the Church, nor as yet defined by any statute. It appears to rest on nothing but the omnipotence of Parliament—a dictum which has lost somewhat of its moral force.

suffice to make marriage and divorce “purely questions of civil right between individuals in their lay character” and questions “not spiritual?” Is it no spiritual question whether “a man shall leave his father and mother to cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh?” or, inversely, whether that union shall be again dissolved? Are there no contracts entered into with God: no obligation of the spiritual life: no laws of conscience subject to the pastors of the Church: no relations to the Holy Sacraments, and other Christian offices? Surely this is to make dower and alimony, and legitimate issue to be every thing, and the sanctities which make wedlock holy to be nothing. We grant that civil questions of the greatest magnitude are involved in these causes; nevertheless the least precept in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than they. If divorce be a question “between individuals in their lay character,” in what is marriage holy? It does not follow, because the essence of marriage is in the verbal contract of the parties, that such a contract is only a *civil* contract. It is first a natural contract, founded on the personal will of the parties: in a Christian state it is also a contract of conscience, founded on the laws of revealed morality, and of the divine origin of marriage. The Church takes up and blesses that contract: the State recognizes it when so blessed, and it becomes then among us, that is in a state Christian, and at no time before, a *public* and *civil* contract. Strip it of its *civil* re-

cognition, and of the spiritual benediction, it then reverts to the personal religious contract of two parties binding themselves consciously by the divine law, to a divine institution. Even in a Heathen state marriage is not a mere *civil* contract. It is in its essence immutably religious. If the tribunal to judge and give sentence of divorce be a civil tribunal, why may not the Legislator who shall define the sufficient and justifying causes of divorce be also a civil Legislator? The effect of this has been already ascertained. The laws of Prussia at this day are an example. And in France, when the laws of divorce were relaxed at the first Revolution, in the three first months of 1793 the number of divorces amounted to 562 in Paris alone. The marriages were 1785, so that the divorces were to the marriages as one to three. All the divorces in Doctors' Commons for a whole century before that date did not amount to much more than one-fifth of the number in Paris alone in these three months.*

It is deeply to be feared that the transferring of jurisdiction in divorce from the tribunal which is founded upon the conscience and laws of divine revelation, is only the first step towards opening in the Legislature the grounds and conditions on which divorce shall be permitted in the State.†

* Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace. Works, vol. viii., p. 104.

† For the dangerous increase of the tendency to have recourse to Parliament for sentence of divorce the following facts will suffice:—

It needs but little imagination to suppose a case in which the State may divorce parties whom the Church must still regard as man and wife: it needs less to point out the universal confusion of all spiritual relations which must then ensue. I know of no subject more likely to bring on hereafter the worst collisions between the civil and spiritual powers: the worst, because of a kind in which the State will not, and the Church cannot, give way.

Waiving all discussion of abstract questions as to the reasons for which causes of marriage and divorce have from the earliest ages of Christianity been subject to the cognizance of the Church, it is plain that public morals, the purity of private and social life, are all alike concerned in opposing every thing which can strip the marriage bond of the sanctities which make it both strong and sacred. If the State no longer desire the intervention of the Church, and certainly, for her own sake, the Church does not desire to intervene, in the matrimonial questions of those who are not united at her altars, this at least we may claim on the lowest grounds of

The Divorce Bills from the Reformation to George I. 5

From 1714 to 1776 60

„ 1776 to 1800 70

„ 1800 to 1830 80 to 90

„ 1830 to 1844 (14 years) 53

‘Thoughts on the Law of Divorce,’ &c., by Dr. R. Phillimore,
p. 20.

toleration, and the highest grounds of justice, that no purely civil judge shall interpose to put asunder, without cognizance of the Church, those whose contract it has witnessed, whom it has declared to be “man and wife together in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

By the 55th section of the bill, as it was originally drawn, it was proposed to give to this purely secular court the power of enforcing its proceedings by sentence of excommunication, which shall have “force and effect of definitive sentences, such sentences being pronounced as spiritual censures for offences of ecclesiastical cognizance.” The following section takes away all civil consequences of such excommunication, except imprisonment for six months.*

It is here then proposed, first, to retain the penalty of excommunication, against which so much has been spoken and written as oppressive and invidious: next, to continue the odious consequence of imprisonment attaching to it: and lastly, to commit the highest spiritual chastisement in Christ’s Church to a secular judge, for the enforcement of merely secular proceedings, and for secular ends.† If this be not a prostitution of the discipline of Christ, what can be?

But further, the 68th and 80th sections together

* Bill, &c., sect. 55, 56.

† This has been since withdrawn.

have the effect of forbidding all tribunals, whether of the State or of the Church, to excommunicate any persons living in incest, adultery, or fornication : so that this same bill which arms the Court of Probate with power to repel from the Holy Communion, and from all Christian rites, persons offending in matters of wills and legacies, disarms the Church of the power to excommunicate persons guilty of adultery and of incest.

And if the Act should pass in this form, there would exist within this Christian realm of England no punishment, spiritual or civil, for incestuous and adulterous persons as such. This bill, at a time when every daily paper is loaded with details of profligacy, is equivalent to a proclamation of absolute impunity for offences of this most heinous character. There would exist no tribunal empowered to repress such vices by punishment, or by chastisement, or in any way to take cognizance of them : our law would become a scandal among nations.

[One vicious principle runs through the whole Bill. The framers of it have treated the ecclesiastical jurisdiction as one simple and uncompounded authority emanating from the State. The source of this error appears to be in a hasty use of the great principle that the fountain of all jurisdiction, both civil and ecclesiastical, is ultimately the Crown alone. Now there is a sense in which this

is altogether true; and a sense in which it is partially, but most vitally, false. It is true thus far. In every state the right of jurisdiction (i.e. *jus dicendi*), of declaring and enforcing rights, resides in the supreme civil power. But even in a heathen state there are rights of nature antecedent to the defined forms of social law, which the civil power may adopt, clothe with legal accidents, and perpetuate as law in the commonwealth, but may not in one jot or tittle either abrogate or contravene. In a Christian State (that is, a State which has entered into communion with the Church) all the powers which inhere from the beginning, and inalienably, in the spiritual constitution of the Church, become clothed in forms recognised by the tribunals of the civil government; and are the subject-matter of a concurrent jurisdiction. For instance: excommunication, which was exercised in forms purely spiritual by the Church of the first ages, afterwards became clothed in legal forms, and was followed by civil consequences. It is fully competent to the civil ruler to abolish both those consequences and that clothing, for both emanate from the supreme fountain of civil jurisdiction; but it is not competent to any or all the civil powers on earth to hinder or forbid the purely spiritual jurisdiction of the Church over its members in all matters of sacraments and offices of the Christian life. Limiting, then, the word 'jurisdiction' to the secular forms in which the

spiritual power of the Church has in Christian states been clothed, there can be no difficulty in assenting, in its fullest breadth, to the principle that the ultimate fountain of all coercive jurisdiction, *in foro exteriori*, is the Crown. But this is not broad enough to carry the conclusion for which it is laid. In the Consistory Court of every bishop, and therefore in the whole system of our ecclesiastical law, there are two perfectly distinct elements united in one form and process. The spiritual tribunals of the Church existed before there was a Christian state to clothe them with civil jurisdiction; and they survive the abolition of those superadded privileges. For the souls' health of its own flock it must still sit, judge, and pronounce. No power can forbid it. Whether or no the State take cognizance of adultery and incest, as social evils, the Church is bound to deal with the offender for the salvation of his soul.]

It is therefore earnestly to be hoped that the Bill now before Parliament may yet be laid aside for a more mature consideration. There is something very instructive in the fact, that the Report of 1832, one of the ablest, most detailed, and elaborate ever framed on this subject, running, as it does, to a great length, and treating copiously of wills, and matrimony, and all secular and pecuniary causes, devotes to the highest and most intimately vital parts of the whole subject,—the spiritual cor-

rection of the Church, out of seventy-three folio pages not quite three; and it is there mentioned only to be abolished. The testamentary and matrimonial jurisdiction may well be thought sufficiently treated: on the corrective jurisdiction, which touches the sanctity and life of the Church, nothing less than a new investigation and Report, by spiritual persons, is required.

In a system so ancient and complex as our ecclesiastical law, it is impossible to foresee all the effects of the slightest changes. Principles of the deepest action are so interwoven in all its parts, that when we seem to be removing only a disease, we may be cutting through provisions that are necessary to the functions of life. Every alteration unmasks new consequences, and runs out into numberless relations on all sides. By the most superficial changes we may paralyse members which we never thought to be implicated in the experiment. For this reason, changes long delayed, reforms often defeated, improvements long waited for, are for the most part wisest and best. It has been true in the case before us. The very difficulties which have hindered, year by year, the successive Ecclesiastical Courts Bills have been our safeguard. [Every defeat has remanded them for further inquiry: and if any one be tempted to be impatient at the slowness with which our old ecclesiastical institutions yield even to improvements, let us look at the condition

of the Church in a neighbouring country, where the whole antient ecclesiastical law, with all its tribunals, has been swept away. There is hardly a social relation which does not exhibit some false position, some direct contradiction, whether between the Church and State, or the Episcopate and the Government, or the bishops and the parochial clergy, or both, with the heads of families, or the parochial clergy with the municipal authorities, the local proprietors, the agents of the Minister of Public Instruction, or the like.* The whole is a jarring contact of two incongruous systems, giving opportunity day after day for needless and dangerous collisions.

There is safety even in the mere dead weight and passive resistance of old institutions. It seems to be a providential law that every age should retain a tenacious hold upon the next succeeding, so as to preserve it from the full momentum of the social forces which impel it onwards. An abrupt severing of two generations is a revolution. In the Church this is especially true. Its most perfect condition is at all times made up of things old and new, mutually tempering each other. Our true strength is in our historical traditions; in the sum of past centuries which is contained in the

* See the collection of Facts and Documents given in the English Review, No. IV., Article 2, on 'The Church and State in France,' and in the Foreign Intelligence in No. VI.

Church of England. This is the principle of our public stability ; and by this it is our highest practical wisdom to abide. The popular strength of the English Church, apart from the spiritual action of its pastors, is in its unwritten prerogatives ; in privileges which are recorded in no statute, which are read in no roll of Parliament ; in usages, customs, and acknowledged prescriptions surrounding the spiritual throne of every bishop and the altar of every parish priest.]

It is therefore greatly to be desired that this vast subject of our Ecclesiastical courts, which has its roots in the English and Norman and Saxon ages of our Church, may be once more referred to a deeper and more penetrating investigation, both by men eminent as lawyers and by persons skilled in the spiritual practice of the pastoral office, before the assent of Parliament be again asked to any measure of reconstruction.

Another Bill intimately affecting the condition of our poor, and their relation to the clergy and to the religious offices of the Church, is the Parochial Settlement Bill. It appears to have been designed upon principles of political economy, with a view to the price of labour and the distribution of rates. Perhaps nothing was more remote from the intention of the framers of it than to affect the moral and religious welfare of the people. Such, however, I believe must be its effect. The only part of

it I need refer to, is the power given by the 35th and 36th sections to the Poor Law Commissioners to declare any union of parishes to be an union for the purposes of settlement, that is, to substitute for settlement in a parish, settlement in an union. Now the objections to this seem obviously to be these. First, it must break through the relations of charity and dependence which ought to bind, and in some measure do bind, the poor in each several parish to the owners and occupiers of the soil. These bonds need nothing to relax them further. The operation of this measure tends finally to dissolve them. Every parish clergyman will feel what is here at stake. One of our chief duties—one of our most earnest endeavours at this very moment—is to re-awaken the sense of local responsibility and the consciousness that possessors of land are natural guardians of the poor who live and die upon their soil. The laws of property are altogether second in the scale of God's providence, compared with these laws of local and personal obligation. No increase of financial or economical efficiency can compensate to the population of England for the loosening of these moral bonds. Rather than weaken them by the removal of the lightest traditionary sanction, our care should be applied to strengthen them by every association of the past. There is a grace of life which is more real than political economy, more living, active, and beneficent than efficient

management and statistical exactness—I mean the love of home and the soil of our fathers, the sympathies of long neighbourhood, and the mutual ties of many generations.

And further, this sinking of parishes in unions must greatly weaken the relation between the pastor and his flock. It tends to make the homes of our poor less fixed and stationary; and we all know how difficult it is to deal with what I may call the shifting element in our parishes, that is, the households who come and go, without ever forming any definite relation to the parish Church or to our pastoral ministrations. Already the parochial system has been superseded in the distribution of relief; partly, again, in the scheme of registration; and now it is proposed to lay it aside in a matter which, more than any other, gives permanency and a sense of home to the poor man. It may be true that for the publication of banns, the solemnization of marriage, for baptism, holy communion, burial, and the like, actual residence is now the foundation of a claim upon our spiritual ministry; and yet how distinctly perceptible is the sense of hereditary attachment and duty on the part of our people to their parish Church and minister! Everything that lessens this, lessens the conventional, and ultimately the actual, hold of religion upon the people. The parochial system of England is the foundation of some of the deepest

and strongest laws of personal and social duty. Every step already taken in the direction of superseding it is to be deplored, and every new step, by all fair and Christian opposition to be resisted. It is to be feared that parish Churches and parish priests will find little sympathy in Union settlers.

The following statement has been lately made in Parliament, with all the circumstances of public responsibility:—"Those incessant witnesses against ignorance and neglect—the gaol returns of the kingdom—have again borne fearful testimony to the extent of moral darkness which still broods over large portions of our population. Of the criminals of Berkshire one-third have been again found unable to read; in Cambridgeshire and Staffordshire one-half were in this condition; in Denbighshire, two-thirds; in Devon, out of 71 offenders under sixteen years of age, only four could read well; in Essex, one-half were in total ignorance; while of 212 convicted prisoners, 48 had never been at a school at all, 40 had been there less than one month, 45 less than two months, 43 less than four months, and only 36 above six months; in Hereford, out of 385 prisoners, only one could read well; in Sussex, out of 877 prisoners, 141 did not know the Saviour's name, 498 just knew His name and no more, 179 had a confused acquaintance with His history, and only 6 per cent. of the whole number

had any reasonable knowledge of the Christian faith.”*

Now what are the chief causes by which the school-time of poor children is shortened? I believe every one familiar with the working of a parish will answer, frequent removal of dwelling, and too early employment in farm and other labour. It is needless to point out how directly the Bill in question would go to increase this evil, first, by weakening the moral relation between the employers of labour and the children of their labourers; next, between the clergy and the parents; and lastly, by increasing for the poor man the facilities and inducements to a change of residence, with a view to carry his labour to a better market, regardless of the local and moral advantages of his children. The necessities of life are already strong enough in this direction, as we know whose daily office it is to counteract them.

It is, moreover, to be well weighed how long dioceses will stand as land-marks to the national life of England when parishes have been effaced; and, in the end, when the boundaries of parishes and of dioceses grow faint, how long the national character of the Church will still be a reality. These few and very superficial remarks are thrown out that you may consider how far the clergy will act wisely in taking prompt steps to bring these

* Speech of Lord John Russell, May 26, 1845. Reported by ‘The Times.’

objections to bear on those with whom it rests to pass or to reject this measure.

And this naturally leads to a kindred subject. Seeing that the decided tendency of political events for years past has been to weaken the hold of our parochial system upon the population of the country, it is our plain wisdom and duty to counterwork against so great a national misfortune, by using all our powers to restore it to its fullest efficiency.

This, of course, my Reverend Brethren, is to be done chiefly by the spiritual functions of our pastoral office. But into that subject it is not my intention now to enter. I refer to it only that I may not seem to pass it over.

The branch of our pastoral care of which it is my purpose to speak, is that which relates to the temporal welfare of our people.

Since the change in the Poor Law they have been thrown in a great degree upon their own industry and upon private alms-giving. In these respects the operation of the law has been beneficial. It has also strongly marked out our duties in two special points—the one, that we should use means to elicit and to support provident habits in our poor; the other, that we should awaken and instruct the charitable sympathies of all our people.

These arguments were strongly pressed by some of the chief advocates of the Poor Law Amendment

Act, at the time of its passing through Parliament, and in some cases the clergy took them at their word, and by restoring more frequent parochial collections for the poor, formed funds of no inconsiderable amount. Good were it if this had been made universal; but golden opportunities are seldom seen till gone. We must now work in this direction at greater cost, and with less reward.

There is, however, another kind of remedy still in our hands, I mean the formation of Benefit or Provident and other like Societies for each several parish.

And this leads me to speak of the benefit clubs now in existence. The evils which generally attach to them are notorious. They are briefly these two: insolvency and immorality. As to insolvency, it is believed that for the most part they are actually bankrupt; that a period of forty years is enough, by arithmetical laws, to destroy them by a simple process of exhaustion.

As to immorality, the yearly feast often exhibits, or is followed by, a scene of riot and excess which converts the solemn service by which the day is opened into a profanation. Many clergymen even refuse on grounds of conscience to officiate. Multitudes among the members of such clubs are at this moment desiring to withdraw; and many are holding aloof from joining them on the ground of these gross excesses.

By the last return ordered by the House of Commons relating to friendly societies enrolled in England and Wales, it appears that in the county of Middlesex there are 346 friendly societies, of which 311 are held in public houses; in the city of London there are 53, of which 46, that is, out of a total of 399, 357, that is, seven-eighths, are held in public houses.

The total of these societies is 9152, and, if we may apply the same rule of proportion, nearly 8000 are held in public houses.* This one fact is enough to account for the double evil of immorality and insolvency.

It is unfortunately for the interest, as it is also in the power, of those at whose houses club-feasts are kept, to encourage the worst parts of the system; I mean the spending of forfeits, and of a certain fixed sum by each member, whether present or absent, sometimes 3*d.*, sometimes 6*d.*, in drink, every quarter or monthly night. It is supposed that 20 or 25 per cent. at least on the funds of many of the clubs is so expended.

In a friendly society, apparently under more than usual observation and care, the whole expenditure of the year ending April, 1845, was 71*l.* 19*s.*, made up of the following three heads:—

* So stated by the Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Labouring Classes, in its paper for April, 1845.

	£.	s.	d.
1. Dinner (132 at 3s. 6d.), band, &c.	28	9	1
2. Expenses of management and salaries	12	12	3
3. Benefit in relief, &c.	30	17	8
	<hr/>		
	£71	19	0

So that the head of benefits exceeds the head of dinner by 2*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.*, 35 persons being relieved, and 132 attending the feast; but the two heads of dinner and management together exceeding the item of relief by 10*l.* 3*s.* 8*d.*, that is by one-seventh of the whole expenditure. This is probably a very fair and creditable example.

The present moment, then, is most favourable for some effort to replace these societies by others on a sounder financial principle, and with a higher moral character.

You are all well aware, my Reverend Brethren, how often this matter has been discussed among us in private, and in our Rural Chapters. I have it also in my power to say that some of the first personages among the laity of this diocese are anxious to give their aid and sanction to any well-considered proposal on this subject.

In what I am about to add there will probably be little or nothing that is new to you. I am myself indebted for most of my information to others who have with great kindness given me the benefit of their knowledge and experience. I trouble you with it on this occasion, because it seems the readiest

mode of opening a general consideration of the question with a view to the adoption of measures in practice. And it is obviously of great importance that whatsoever we do should be done with a full knowledge of what is on foot in other parts of the archdeaconry. Already in one or two instances this want of communication has given rise to causes of subsequent regret. I shall feel very thankful to any of my brethren who will forward to me any information and advice as to the course to be pursued.

There are three principles which appear of the first importance in forming a benefit society :—

First, that it be based on computations made by some eminent actuary, and enrolled under Act of Parliament :

Next, that no portion of the funds shall, on any pretence, be expended in feasting, or at public houses :

Thirdly, that the expenses of management shall be defrayed, if possible, out of funds distinct from the contributions of the members, that is to say, out of voluntary donations and subscriptions from honorary members, or out of the income of investments made by such donations.

Let me in a very few words state to you the benefits held out by three such societies now in operation.

The first is a benefit society, founded in 1842, for the town and county of Cambridge.

It admits among its members men, and women, and children.

It gives allowances in sickness and in old age.

It provides for sums payable at death, or at certain fixed ages: in the latter case being available for apprenticing, or settling children in employment or trade.

The benefit of allowance in sickness, old age, and the payments, at death, or otherwise, may be obtained either separately, or in combination, at the option of the contributor.

The payment may be either monthly, or in one sum, as a perfect qualification.

A member may at any time either reduce or increase his payment and allowance.

Medicine and attendance in sickness may be insured from year to year for individuals or families.*

* The advantages of the branch for providing medical attendance and medicines in sickness may be obtained on the following terms:—

	Annually.
For a man and his wife	6s. 0d.
For every one of their children under 16 years of age, not exceeding four in number . . .	2 0
All such children above four in number are to be attended without extra payment.	
For every single person above 16 years of age . . .	3 0
For each case of midwifery	10 6

Attendance in cases of fracture or dislocation are not included in the above payments.

Thirteen

Provision is made for the reception of existing benefit societies in a body.

The new contributors are entitled to receive allowances at the end of six months, instead of twelve, as in other clubs.

For a sample of the rate of benefits, the following will suffice:—

For a man of 21 years old the monthly payment to obtain 7*s.* 6*d.* in sickness, *for life*, is 1*s.* 3*d.* a-month.

To obtain the same up to 65, and 5*s.* a-week sick or well, working or not working, after that age, 1*s.* 9*d.*, that is only 6*d.* more.

To obtain from the age of 21 10*s.* a-week in sickness, for life, 1*s.* 7½*d.*

To obtain the same up to 65, and 5*s.* a-week sick or well, working or not working, after that age, 2*s.* a-month, that is only 4½*d.* more.

And in this latter case there is included a sum of 4*l.* at death.

For the additional monthly payment of one half-penny to obtain an allowance for life after 65, the monthly payment will cease at 60 years of age.

Young persons may put in upon the lowest scale and gradually raise their payment and allowance to the highest scale.

Thirteen or fourteen medical practitioners are in this way united to the Society; and the members contributing to this branch may select any one of them they may prefer to attend them for the year.

A payment of 1s. 8d. a-month, for a child under one year of age, will secure 16l. at the age of 14.

And if the child should live beyond that age a sick allowance of 10s. up to 65 years, and 5s. a-week, sick or well, afterwards, for life, may be purchased, *free of all monthly payments*, with about the same sum of 16l.

If the child die under 14 years of age the whole deposit will be returned.

A deferred life annuity of any amount, up to 100l. a-year, may likewise be secured: for instance, a person aged 21 paying 2s. a-month, or 20l. 9s. 2d. at once, secures 10l. a-year (3s. 10d. a-week) after 55 years of age, by a payment of 2s. 11d. a-month: the money deposited will be returned in case of death to the family of the depositor.

The higher benefits have reference of course to persons above the labouring poor, such as household servants, small farmers, tradesmen, and others of the middle classes residing in country towns.

This society is founded upon perfect security, and enrolled under an Act of Parliament.

The branch of this society obviously the most important is that of the deferred annuities. It is impossible to go further into detail at this time; but one suggestion will suffice. The purchasing of an annuity is to the poor man, what investment is to the rich. It becomes to him in after-life an in-

come upon his capital, that is, upon his long years of labour.*

The expense of management is defrayed by honorary members.

Another very excellent society, the rules of which have been supplied to me by the kindness of one of our own brethren, was established at Bath.

In some respects it is less comprehensive than the last; but it is equally secure and well conducted.

To obtain 5*s.* a-week in sickness, and 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week after 65, and 5*l.* at death, a man of 21 pays monthly 1*s.* 2*d.*, or 12*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.* in one sum.

Ten shillings in sickness, and 5*s.* a-week after 65, and 10*l.* at death, is secured at the age of 21 by a monthly payment of 2*s.* 4*d.*, or in one sum of 25*l.* 7*s.* 1*d.*

Children are not admitted to receive benefits.

I cannot leave this part of the subject without mentioning the Westbourne Friendly Society, established in 1836, of the good effects of which I have had opportunity of judging. It consists of 154

* I cannot do more than refer to a very useful paper, published by the Labourers' Friend Society, containing the substance of two lectures delivered by the Rev. W. J. Butler, on 'Provision for the Decline of Life,' in which the plan of Deferred Annuities is shown to be far more advantageous than the plan of ordinary sick-clubs, and to the present restricted form of the savings' banks.

members; 102 men, 52 women, and 25 children, endowed with its benefits.

A member may enter for relief in sickness; for a pension or annuity after 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, or 65 years of age, well or ill; for a sum payable at death; and for sums payable to children at the ages of 14 and 21, or for any of these benefits.

Members disabled by sickness, but not wholly unable to work, are entitled to half pay.

The society has a capital of 1208*l.* in the Bank of England. Nothing is spent at public-houses, and the cost of management is defrayed by voluntary donations, or interest accruing upon such donations.

In the last year the sum expended in relief, &c., was 96*l.* 18*s.*, the members of the club being 154; whereas in one before adverted to, having at least 132 members, the amount of relief appears to have been only 30*l.* 17*s.* 8*d.*

The rate of allowance offered by this society is as follows:—

For an allowance of 4*s.* a-week in sickness, with 2*s.* a-week after 65, and 4*l.* at death, a man of 21 will pay monthly, up to 65, 10¼*d.* (tenpence one farthing), or, in one sum, 9*l.* 6*s.* 5*d.*

For a sick allowance of 4*s.* a-week for life, a person of 21 will pay 6½*d.* (sixpence halfpenny) a-month, or, in one sum, 5*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.*

For a pension of 2*s.* a-week after 60 years of

age a person of 21 will pay monthly $7\frac{1}{4}d.$ (seven-pence farthing), or, in one sum, 6*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.*

For 2*l.* at death three farthings a-month, or, in one sum, 13*s.* $9\frac{3}{4}d.$

A monthly contribution of 6*d.*, begun at 21, and continued to 65 years of age, will secure to the depositor 5*l.* 8*s.* $10\frac{1}{2}d.$

I have stated these very minute details to show how easily the benefits of this society may be reached even by the poorest of our people.

Before I leave this part of the subject I would add that, by the operation of the savings' banks, annuities, either immediate or deferred, may be obtained of the value of 4*l.*, and rising to 20*l.* a-year.

A person of 21 years of age may obtain an annuity of 20*l.* a-year on attaining the age of 60 years, at a yearly sum of 3*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*, the money being returned in the event of the depositor's death before the age of 60.

Now, upon all these several systems there is one remark to be made. They are all equally capable of receiving a strictly parochial character. The societies in question are in no way tied to any locality; they have no anniversaries, or meetings at any central spot. For the management of them it is unimportant where the officers reside. By having many local secretaries they, in fact, lose

their restriction to any locality. There may be a branch in any parish, grafted upon the whole system at large, and under the visitation of proper medical and other officers; but the members are never drawn, as a body, out of the boundaries of the parish. For this reason it is perfectly easy for any person, whether the clergyman, schoolmaster, or any other, to accept the office of parochial, that is local secretary. In this way, with all the financial security of the widest system, it may be interwoven with our ordinary parochial charities, such as clothing clubs and the like, and its moral character made to depend upon our own pastoral care.

Two benefits would, I think, follow on such a course. It would, first, be a powerful stimulant to the private charity of our lay brethren, whose heartiest and fullest co-operation in this and all good works it is most important to obtain.

There are many ways in which charitable persons of all ranks in our parishes may assist such a branch society. They may join in defraying the little cost of management, if there be any; they may assist parents in enrolling their children at the earliest age, and therefore at the greatest advantage; they may aid in giving, or in peculiar cases may wholly give, in one sum, the qualification necessary for certain benefits; and this is obviously a wise and lasting reward for deserving boys or

girls, or for meritorious farm servants, especially as age draws on; in this way the whole rising generation may be gradually enrolled; they may enable members of the older clubs to transfer themselves into the new at a rate of equivalent advantage, and thereby help to absorb the insecure and declining societies. In these and many more ways, suggested by the manifold tables and operations of such a society, we may induce all classes of our richer brethren to assist in a work of charity which is so manifestly solid, reasonable, and permanent.

The other benefit is the only additional point I will touch on in connexion with this subject. It must not be supposed that, in objecting so strongly to club-feasts, any objection is raised to a yearly day of meeting and recreation. It is within the discretion of the parish clergyman, and members of the society among his flock, to hold any such anniversary, provided only that no funds of the society be applied to that purpose. This has been already done in some parishes with complete success, by each member, at his own will, contributing a shilling, and the balance, a very unimportant remainder, being defrayed by honorary members. So far from discountenancing a day of recreation for our poor, I believe every one would desire to promote it. A true parish holiday is very different from a tumultuous assembly of people, drawn from

their natural and social relations, without guide, without even the wholesome restraint of the eye and ear of neighbours and of friends. When men become masses they lose all moral consciousness, all self-respect; they are, in fact, out of society, that is, morally outlawed, withdrawn from all that governs and supports their daily sense of order and obligation. Now, this would meet its correction at all points within the precincts of a parish, where all stand related to each other by bonds of charity and of duty. It is very common already to give a holiday and a feast to the parish schools, and upon this might be grafted a gathering of the members of any parochial societies. The service of the parish church would no longer be an inauguration of tumult and excess, but a solemn and grateful meeting of the pastor and his flock.

It is of the greatest moment that all parishioners of every rank in life should take part in such a festival. There is hardly a more active negative cause of the licentious degeneracy of recreation among the poor than the withdrawal of superiors. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the poor desire to be free from the restraint of their presence. Their kindly aspect and sympathy in a day of enjoyment is unspeakably grateful to our people.

At the very mention, however, of a parish holiday there arises a remembrance of the revelling and tumult of fairs and village feasts. The wakes

and church-ales of our past history make us naturally fearful of laying again the seeds of such disorders.

Nevertheless, there are facts in our social state which cannot be gainsayed. We have a people straitened by poverty—worn down by toil; they labour from the rising to the setting of the sun; and the human spirit will faint or break at last. It is to this unrelenting round of labour that the sourness so unnatural to our English poor, but now too often seen, is chiefly to be ascribed. There is something in humanity which pines for a season of brighter and fresher thoughts, and becomes sharp and bitter if it be not satisfied. What is the fact? Except Sunday and one or two days—such as Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Ascension Day, which, through the Christian kindness of many landlords and farmers in this neighbourhood, has of late, without loss of wages, been given to their labourers—our poor have no days of relaxation for mind or body. Time must be redeemed for the poor man. The world is too hard upon him, and makes him pay too heavy a toll out of his short life. And the result of this over-labour is now acknowledged by witnesses of every colour: politicians, speculators, economists, physicians, commissioners of factories, even officers recruiting for the army. All with one voice declare that the national spirit, and even the standard of bodily

strength and stature, is sensibly depressed. In official Reports, formally made to Parliament, instruction and recreation are pointed out as two things absolutely needed. Indeed, it is impossible to say how great a corrective of some among our worst immoralities might have been in this way provided: how many, for instance, might have been saved from the sottish habits of a beer-shop by being taught and guided in days of relaxation to find happiness in a purer form. How should our people spend such little leisure as they have with discretion, if they are never taught to use leisure well? I know that one day will not do much, but it recognises a principle, and establishes a precedent. Those who have lived, as it is our blessing to do, among the agricultural poor, well know that, with some rudeness of address, and with faults not to be denied, they are still a noble-hearted race, whose sincerity, simplicity, and patience we should buy cheap at the cost of our refinements. But little is needed to make their holiday. The green fields, and tools idle for a day, the church-bell, an active game, simple fare, the sport of their children, the kindly presence and patient ear of superiors, is enough to make a village festival.* I am not now speaking of towns, which have difficulties of their own kind, and need a separate treatment.

* I cannot touch on this subject without an expression of thanks to one who has made it peculiarly his own. No one,

It is worthy to be considered whether we may not, by the formation of parochial branches of such societies as I have spoken of, and by attaching to them any other kindred funds and charities, form a centre round which the confidence and interest of our flocks may, with the kindly sympathy and countenance of all, be drawn to meet.

These suggestions have been thrown out in the belief that means are thus afforded to us of again attaching our people to our parochial system by new and constraining principles of association ; and that the effect of such societies will be not only beneficial to the temporal welfare of the poor, but will tend to confirm sound moral habits, to awaken sympathies, to stimulate almsgiving, and to strengthen by all secondary means the spiritual exercise of our pastoral office.

I will leave it, therefore, with an earnest hope that it will be taken up, and maturely considered with a view to practice, at our Rural Chapters. Such papers as I have collected shall be at the disposal of any of my brethren who may desire to take immediate steps.

There now remains one only subject more on which I will ask you for awhile to bear with me.

whatever may be his judgment on the point, can read the letter of Lord John Manners on National Holidays without acknowledging that it exhibits a happy example of true English benevolence, and of that highest nobleness, a lowly and loving care for the poor of Christ's flock.

The mutual confidence and brotherly love happily subsisting among us gives to every one a share and a right to participate in the convictions, encouragements, and hopes even of the least in our body. I claim for myself no other place in speaking on a subject so momentous as the present condition of the Church in England, as it stands affected by the internal and external action of the last ten or fifteen years. In one word, then, every year, both by its prosperous and by its adverse events, has deepened, with a force for which I can find no adequate expression, the belief—if I dared I would rather say the consciousness—that the Divine Presence and Power is with us in our pastoral office, in our sacraments, and in our whole spiritual being; restoring us, I trust, to a higher and holier life, and moulding this branch of the Catholic Church to be the channel of a great effusion of God's love not only to ourselves, but to the nations entrusted to our spiritual charge.

This conviction does not arise from an unconsciousness of our many and miserable sins as a Church and nation; nor from any insular pride with which we are perhaps not unjustly reproached; neither is it founded on private theories, nor on proofs that exist on paper. It rests upon the broad and accumulating tokens of God's mercy and overruling care; and upon the marks of gracious and gentle chastisement with which He now is visiting us. We must all acknowledge that any confidence

founded on what we are, or on what we are doing, or on any worldly or intellectual position we may occupy as a Church, is probably little better than a Pharisaical illusion. And, again, comfortable persuasions, founded upon a mere sanguine temper which will not stay to appreciate really existing corruptions, or to deal truly with hostile facts, are altogether intoxicating and dangerous. But there are two marks of God's favourable presence in which we may confidently trust—the fruits of repentance, and the visitations of correction. If any man cannot see these upon the Church of England now, we may well spare to reason with him.

Let us first turn to the tokens of God's mercy and over-ruling care during these last years of peculiar trial. When we look to the strong and sudden movements, both political and theological, which have burst simultaneously, both from within and from without, upon the Church, it is impossible to refer our present balanced state to any other cause than the immediate Providence which from the beginning of the Church has so poised the currents of human action as to preserve the integrity of His own kingdom. Its whole history might be exhibited in illustration of two great laws: one, that of the human mind oscillating between extremes; and the other, that of the Divine economy so limiting the results of that oscillation as to combine it with the safety and perpetuity of the Church. We all

recognise the former law in the common proverb "one extreme begets another;" and the latter is manifestly revealed to us in every century of Christendom. I will not weary you by going through the earlier examples of this fact. You know them better than I. It is enough for our present use to take the history of the English Church since the beginning of the sixteenth century; that history is a series of reactions. First in every successive reign, from Henry to Edward, from Edward to Mary, from Mary to Elizabeth. Then, again, the Puritan excess was a reaction upon the reigns of James and Charles I.; and the ecclesiastical movement of Charles and James II. was a reaction upon the Puritan excess.

There was perhaps no moment when the tendency of public events towards the Church of Rome was more advanced than in the reign of James II.; and no period when the contrary tendency received so sudden and formal a development as at the accession of William III.

The same law is traceable in slower operation, and at longer periods, in almost every country in the north and west of Europe; and has continued in activity down to this day. The last twenty years of peace have set in motion individual and social forces which tend powerfully in one ecclesiastical direction; and changes, both political and religious, in this country have been first the results and

then the causes of a movement among ourselves in which is alike our safety and our danger. If such complicated effects may ever be referred to a single proximate cause, it may without doubt be said that the powerful awakening of the theological principles which mark the last ten years may be ascribed to certain legislative acts, by which the Church in England was thrown for support upon her own inward and spiritual constitution.*

Every step of withdrawal on the part of the State, whether by acts directly affecting the Church, or by the admission of all religious communities into an almost co-ordinate relation, has been followed by an inward awakening of its own dormant laws, a necessary, but in part an over-active, and therefore morbid self-introspection, by which individual minds have suffered, and some have been lost to us. In the violent sway of intellectual and spiritual causes which have been upon us, it is a miracle of God's mercy that multitudes have not been hurried away. It is probable that we are upon the first launch of a reaction, equal in reach and duration to the period which has just come to an end. And let us not shut our eyes to any facts of an anxious

* It is remarkable that in France the act of the State in divorcing the Church, in 1830, has almost extinguished the old Gallican spirit. The Church, shaken from its support in France, has fallen back for maintenance on Rome. It has become, to a great extent, ultra-montane.

kind. The condition of theology on the Continent, especially in Germany and France (I mean both Roman and Protestant), must, intimately and more actively, every day affect the state of theology in England; and this, combined with the systematic exertions of communions, whose members sincerely think they do God service in assailing the English Church, must every year render more anxious and difficult the exercise of our pastoral office.

All this has been advancing in the last fifteen years. Now it is precisely during that period of time in which more adverse public events have come upon the Church, and greater inroads have been made into its political establishment, and in one sense even its religious peace, than during the whole century and a half preceding, that the greatest energies have been put forth, and the greatest works have been accomplished.

Fifteen years ago the Church of England rested upon its old constitutional foundations. It was privileged and protected by the whole force of the Statute Book; Acts of Parliament were passed; grants of public money voted for its extension; the whole weight and influence of the State went with it; and there are many who look back to those times with a fond regret, as to the period of its highest security and strength. And yet up to that very time secessions to every form of dissent were numberless; conversions from among Dissenters

comparatively rare ; multitudes nominally in the Church were really members of dissenting communities ; the number of Churches built exceedingly small ; the increase of clergy hardly appreciable ; the standard of almsgiving, especially to spiritual works, not only low in itself, but acknowledged only by a few ; our missions languished ; our colonial Churches hardly existed ; public opinion was estranged and hostile ; the hearts of the poor, if with us at all, were but faintly attached to the pastors of the Church. Such, of course with local exceptions, in the times of its external apparent strength, was its real internal weakness.

Fifteen years, certainly adverse to the external clothing of the Church, have passed over us, and the phenomena of our condition are exactly reversed. The Acts of 1828 and 1829 reduced the old theory of establishment almost to a name ; every successive year has brought fresh departures from our ancient principles, such as the recent laws relating to marriage, registration, tithes, relief of the poor, and the like ; this is so much of public recognition withdrawn from the Church ; grants for the building of Churches for our destitute millions have ceased ; the few paltry thousands to maintain clergy in the colonies withdrawn ; the whole active theory of the regale, as defined at the Reformation, has been abdicated in silence ; and direct countenance and support ex-

tended both abroad and at home to religious bodies in perpetual conflict with the Church.

And yet, despite of all this, there has arisen within the Church, our enemies themselves being judges, an energy and power of expansion never seen before. I am speaking not of the work of any one body or party within the Church, but of all men, of whatever hue or form of opinion, who have spent and been spent for Christ and for the souls for whom He died. We have the issue of all their labours now. What have been the fruits of these fifteen years of adverse events? A thousand Churches; a work of almost universal restoration, never to be estimated; an increase of clergy, probably far exceeding the increase of Churches; a number of congregations newly formed, exceeding the number of individual minds which have been drawn from us; more than half-a-million of money in the last five years offered to the work of national education; a whole system of institutions for training school teachers; the reorganization of almost every diocese on the principle of its spiritual unity and government; the founding of ten colonial Churches, pregnant with works of faith and of the Spirit; colleges and cathedrals rising in the far east and west; a two-fold and growing number of missionaries and catechists among the Heathen; and now, to give an unity and head to our work of missions, a college

for missionary pastors, founded by the side of the Metropolitan Church of Canterbury, a main source of restored Christianity to ourselves, by acts of private munificence on a scale worthy of a work so noble. If such be the comparative benefits of a state of external peace and of external conflict, may the shadows of worldly adversity for ever hang upon the Church of England !

But these are only material and external fruits, capable of being produced by mere excitement, false zeal, political rivalry, ambition, and the like : and even if they be purely Christian in their source, they are no more than fruits meet for repentance after long and sinful neglect of Christ's flock both abroad and at home. Yet, as fruits of repentance, they are, we humbly trust, acceptable to Him, and tokens that He is with us. But they are not all that He has given us. And yet, Brethren, I do not know how to speak of deeper things. We can hardly trust ourselves to say more than this, that He has been pleased, by manifold indications, to show us that there are realities more vital than all that I have spoken of. By the labours of many, diverse in many things while on earth, but now all one in Him, He has taught us that the standard of a conventional religion is a poor substitute for the Sermon on the Mount ; and that the proprieties of personal and domestic life are but cold approaches to the Communion of Saints. May we not trust that He

has revealed to unknown multitudes among our flocks a broader rule of sanctity, and stirred them with a higher aspiration after the life that is “hid with Christ in God?”

The other token we possess of God’s favour and presence with us is to be seen in the marks of correction which are visibly upon the Church.

Every adverse event may be regarded as a chastisement for some failure in our stewardship. When we so read it, adversity becomes our strength. The national prerogatives of the Church would never have been abridged had it not ceased to guide the will and spiritual life of the nation. The bitter and unrelenting conflicts which some time past were carried on among ourselves, often about nothing: the seduction of members from our communion: the unsettled faith of others: the coldness and unbrotherly temper too often seen in our own body—what are all these but warnings mercifully sent to bid each one of us to “repent, and do the first works?”

Whatever remedy there be for our many ills, verbal disputation will be found to have no health in it. We need humility, not dispute: not argument, but action. Our diseases lie deeper than the intellect: and by a deeper treatment, if at all, they must be healed. There are two great fields of controversy: one which is in the past, and is carried on by literature, learned criticism, historical inquiry, abstract reasonings: another, which is strictly

in the present, and has its whole existence in action, patience, and charity. Of these two kinds the former is addressed to the intellect, and is subtle, entangling, unpersuasive: the other is addressed to the spiritual intuition, and is direct, unambiguous, convincing: the one speaks to the few, the other to all men alike.

It is the peculiar and morbid disposition of this day to stimulate the first kind of controversy, and to evade the second. And it is precisely in this that we shall most prevail. We have too much of rash speculation, and headlong assertion. The deeper movements of men's hearts need other arguments. Self-denial and silence are overwhelming answers even to the intellect. Controversial reasons weigh little against devotion, or historical difficulties against visible sanctity of life. And these best of arguments are most in our power.

Let us look at all adverse events as admonitions to mutual forgiveness—to greater devotion—to a more chastened spirit. If we had one thing we should have all things: without this one thing we have nothing, though we have all beside—love one to another. In whatsoever may be permitted to fall upon us, let us read the warning of Him that dresseth the true vine, rebuking us for our barrenness. And yet in that rebuke let us read also our happier destinies: "Every branch that beareth not fruit He taketh away." Such, God be thanked, is

not yet our doom, though we have deserved it. "And every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it," with sharpness and the knife, "that it may bring forth more fruit." The last few years have given many a sign both of purging and of increase. We need no controversial learning to tell us that ours is a living branch. There is no room for arguments when fruits are to be gathered. Men argue when they cannot see them.

My Reverend Brethren, I believe I speak all your hearts when I say that, for myself, I humbly thank God that He has permitted me to be a member of a Church in which I am not worthy to keep the door. It is not unnatural among brethren so closely related, so intimately joined by common duties and habitual co-operation, that we should pass in review at such a time as this the great spiritual realities which overpower all the verbal and intellectual objections of scholastic controversy. There are difficulties which are best answered by living facts, as the sophism about infinite motion—*solvitur ambulando*. We rest upon a basis of facts, laid by the Providence of our Divine Head; and on that basis we believe firmly that the Church of England is a true and living member of the Holy Catholic Church; neither heretical in dogma, nor schismatical in the unhappy breach of Christendom; in will and desire united to all Christ's members upon earth; her faith the baptismal faith

of all saints from the beginning ; her cause austere, but just ; and her plea valid in the Court of Heaven. And if this be so, then in virtue and power she shall be, as she has been, a mother of saints—a root of churches in east, west, and south ; at this time, it may be, peculiarly tried, and yet there hath no trial come upon us but such as is common to the Church. Many more threatening signs even now are hanging over almost all other Churches—signs of conflicts yet to be endured, with doubtful issue*—through which, by God’s help, we have been saved, “yet so as by fire.” Be our trials what they may, every year deepens in thousands of contrite hearts the tokens of Christ’s presence—every year quickens and unfolds, against all antagonist powers, the spiritual life and fruitful energy

* There is no branch of the Roman Catholic communion in the North and West of Europe which does not at this moment exhibit signs of conflict, and some of a truly alarming kind. Passing over the lesser contest in the Tyrol, and even in parts of Belgium, of which the Jesuits are the subject, it is enough to mention France and Germany. In the former a strong movement against the Roman Catholic Church has appeared in the dioceses of Verdun, Châlons, Limoges, Poitiers, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Fréjus. In the last, ten parishes have almost unanimously renounced Romanism. In La Rochelle it is said that twenty-five parishes are desiring to be placed under Protestant pastors. As to Germany, the late schism has formed forty-eight communities, and is still spreading. The state of Germany, both among Protestants and Roman Catholics, gives warning of a fearful future. While we are listening at home to every word and footfall, it may be that events are near elsewhere which shall make the whole Church to ring.

of the Church which bare us. And shall any be tempted to mistrust? Shall we ask proofs of our regeneration, or of our waking consciousness, or of the reality of our own soul? There are things which go before all proof—all reasonings rest upon them: logical defences cloud their certainty. Such are our pledges of His presence. They are the tokens of no hand but His; and “if God be for us, who can be against us?”





